Sam, Rachael, Bryan, Mike, & Tyler

Progressive Reform Project

(It’s a Saturday afternoon at Buckland Hill’s food court. There’s an empty table where five very different people decide to sit down. Muckraker Jacob Riis sits down with his Panini. Next to him sits President Theodore Roosevelt with his steak dinner. After a long day of shopping, Susan B. Anthony also takes a seat at the table with her small meal consisting of just bread and water. Three minutes later, Conservationist John Muir sits down with his Salad with all natural vegetables mixed in. Lastly, John Rockefeller occupies the last seat at the table and sits down to enjoy his lobster and caviar. The five indulge in a small talk conversation about their food selections and begin to become acquainted with each other.)

President: “Hello everyone! It’s a pleasure to meet you all! How is every one's food today?”

John Rockefeller: :”It’s quite excellent! thank you for asking.”

President: “I Hope I'm not being too forward when asking this, but how are you able to afford such eloquent food selections?”

John Rockefeller: “No, don’t worry about it. Fortunately I've been blessed with a blossoming Oil industry. Even though you tried to get rid of it, with all your little trusting busting you had going on!,. Which is not all bad i know you want to try to get rid of so called “corruption”. Your probably just jealous of me because “I have dominated the story of Standard Oil”(Gordon, John Steele). Anyways, what about you, Mr. President? Your meal isn’t too shabby either; steak and potatoes isn’t exactly the meal of an immigrant..”

Jacob Riis: “Hey!, watch it here. Just because I am immigrant doesn't mean that I eat poor now.”

John Rockefeller: “Oh my, I'm sorry to make an offensive comment, but what do you mean?”

Jacob Riis: “Well, I came to Denmark when i was 21. I experienced the poorest living conditions in the tenement houses i lived in. I acquired my first job as a police reporter. Experiencing all housing problems of poor immigrants. Seeing all the poverty that existed inspired me to write my book. How the Other Half Lives, in order to show people the side of poverty they don’t see.

John Rockefeller: “Doesn’t it hurt you to see how sad these people live and know you can’t do anything about it?”

Jacob Riis: “Well, that’s exactly it, from that moment on, I decided to devote my career to Social reforms, which is very fitting to this so called “Progressive Era” that we’re currently in.”

John Rockefeller: “Is that so? Please, tell me more about how you tried to make social refinements.”

Jacob Riis: “Poor were the victims rather than the makers of their fate.“ (Riis, Jacob) They couldn’t do anything about their future and I would not stand for it so i took matters into my own hands in order to change society. My main goal was to make life better for them.

President: “Your reforming efforts are impeccable, Mr. Riis. Do you think your attempts at reforms turned out successful?

Jacob Riis: Of course my muckraking ways of reform were successful. I’ve raised awareness throughout the country using photojournalism which showed the public pictures of what life is truly like in the slums.

President: It’s inspiring to know you came from a low life of poverty to one of the most famous Muckrakers of our Progressive Era.”

Jacob Riis: “Why, than you very much. What about you, Theodore? As the President our United States of America I'm sure you’re interested in helping our country progress, and making refinements to it as well, no?”

President:”Well, when I first reached office, I reduced the policy of laissez-faire that had plagued our government for several presidents in a row. Also, I established the “Square Deal,” which was aimed at at: controlling big businesses, conserving resources, and consumer protection. I called it the “Square Deal” because i feel that the deal was fair and that (character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike.) I felt this was fair because although the deal would be attacking businesses’ trusts, it still would be protecting the businesses’ from the extreme demands of organized labor, or labor unions. Another reform that I was responsible for was when I established over 150 National Forests, 5 National Parks, the first 51 Federal Bird Reservations and 18 National Monuments, and also the first 4 National Game Reserves. Throughout my tenure in office, I am proud to say that I provided federal protection for over 230 million acres of land in America! I don't mean to brag, but i made so much positive reform on this country, that i even won the Nobel Peace Prize!”

Jacob Riis: “Wow, that’s fantastic to know you think that way, judging by where I came from in the deepest parts of poverty. So I guess I can conclude that you're responsible for this so called “Reform Fever.”

President: “You could say that.”

John Rockefeller: “Although your intentions are to help our country I can’t exactly say I'm pleased with the fact you have a desire to go after big businesses like my own. Why do you believe monopolies are a such a threat?”

President:”They were a threat during this period because they were very hard for the government to grasp control of and also they were just bad for society because if there is no competition between businesses, then a consumer can only get that product from them and they can make the price as high or low as they want because there will be no where else for the consumer to get it from. Also in addition to them determining prices, they can also supply an inferior products and don’t have to ave any incentive to improve the product.”

John Rockefeller: “I see, Mr. President, I don’t necessarily agree with you, but that’s your opinion.”

President: “That’s true, your opinions are your opinions as well. What about you over there, the only one eating the natural and healthy meal at the table!”

John Muir: “Are you speaking to me, Mr. President?”

President:”You bet I'm speaking to you, what’s with the all natural dinner you chose?”

John Muir: “I like to conserve all that is natural, and therefore make sure my meals are natural as well!.

Jacob Riis: “Whoa, so you’re a conservationist? When did your ideas all begin?”

John Muir: Starting from my younger days, I originally came from Dunbar, Scotland and moved to Wisconsin when i was just eleven years old. ever since i was young, I've had a passion for nature and conserving its rare and natural beauty.”

President: “I like the way you think. I agree with you, i mean, after all, i spend a lot of my effort trying to conserve resources as well as natures you can tell by my preservation of over 230 million acres of land! .What exactly have you done to start preserving?”

John Muir: “Well actually Roosevelt, i conserve not preserve. I thought we were close friends! How could you mistake me, a conservationist, as a preservationist?! “

President: “Well... I...Uhm....”

John Muir: “I’m just pulling your socket! I preserve too. I tricked your socks, didn’t i? Well yeah, I preserve the natural beauty of distinctive areas such as the Yosemite National Park in 1890, and California’s Sierra Nevada range that surrounded the Yosemite Valley. Oh! Also, I've seen the cruelties of what man can do, like slaughtering innocent animals such as bison or birds that refuge at our national parks that are soon to be extinct! Intolerable! How cruel of them! So, i began to act and eventually Congress passed the Lacey Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act that prevented hunting of such beautiful creatures.”

John Rockefeller: “How intriguing! Indeed, it is most marvelous! I wonder if my family over generations are doing well with their conservation. I’ve heard that they made over 20 national parks. Any who, how successful was your quest to preserve and conserve?”

John Muir: Well, knowing me, you know Rockefeller, we were mostly successful with a little bumps on our road, but i was the founder and president of the Sierra Club in 1892. Even if you were showing off your family and their successes, I was very successful! Does that surprise your doodle? I’ll tell you what we did. Well, What we started to do was, we protected the Sierra Nevada mountains in the beginning and eventually i helped create Yosemite, Kings Canyon and other national parks, but not as much as over 20 though. I got to give you props for that! And i guess the only failure i had was that, “ I died of pheumonia in L.A. on the 24th of December of 1914.” \*Sighs. What a sorrowful day that day.”

Susan B. Anthony: “well, isn’t that delightful... to know someone else is so serious about a cause that’s important to them. Even after they died.”

John Muir: “Why thank you Susan! I give you lots of respect too! For women rights. It may be a strong topic to talk about, but i really respect how you take up a stand for many people and how courageous you are.”

Susan B. Anthony: Oh... Why thank you John! You sure know how to talk.”

John Rockefeller: “Yeah yeah Susan. And John! Stop flirting with Susan, sheesh!... Hey! I think i know you from somewhere, aren’t you the publisher of that weekly paper that comes out, about the Women’s Suffrage Movement?”

John Muir: “Well then! Someone had to go and be a joykill.”

Susan B. Anthony: “ Right? The nerve of some people! I believe you mean “The Revolution,” Sir.”

John Muir: “Yeah! that’s the paper, I've heard all about it, and all about you for that matter..”

Susan B. Anthony: “I’m glad to know my efforts in women’s Reform finally resulted with a positive outcome for women everywhere.”

Jacob Riis: “If you don’t mind me asking Miss. Anthony, Why were you able to finally bring upon equal rights for women after many predominant women have fought and risked their lives for the purpose of women’s rights?”

Susan B. Anthony: “Jacob, believe me, it was a long and tedious process to fight for the rights of women. I was even arrested in attempts to fight for the ultimate “cause.” I always stood strong when I let others know, "Men their rights and nothing more, women their rights and nothing less.” ”Now what do women want? Simply the same ballot.” (Anthony, “Suffrage and the Working Woman”). I’m glad I can let others now how serious I am about obtaining The voting rights for women. Through my dedication, I founded the National Woman's Suffrage Association along with my best friend Elizabeth Cady Stanton as well. Not only am i fighting for women’s rights, but we, the women of the United States of America, are also fighting for political and economic equality.

President: “Wow, Susan. You and Elizabeth have truly proved yourselves to be such empowering women.”

John Rockefeller: “I couldn’t agree more Theodore. Certainly women that will go down in history.”

John Muir: “I’m sure we can all agree you turned out t be a very successful woman, but I'd hope that you believe that as well, don’t you?

Susan B. Anthony:”Of course. Thankfully, my efforts were more than successful. I feel pretty confident in saying I was apart of an accomplished group of women that changed the live of many others and impacted history. Before my impacts on women’s rights, many women were looked down upon. “Society dooms her always to a subordinate position, as and inferior.” (Anthony, “Suffrage and the Working Woman”). I was pleased to know my successes changed that way of thinking. The predominant suffragists wanted to get across how false it is that women are “Inferior.” As a matter of fact. Elizabeth and I attempted to get across out point of equal women’s rights by writing and publishing "The History of Woman Suffrage.” I Believe my fight was also successful because i was able to bring attention internationally to the issue of women’s suffrage with the International Council of Women i founded in 1888. I mean, i even wrote my own amendment named after me in hopes that I could give the women of the United States of America the right to vote. (Later became the 19th amendment!).

Jacob Riis: “Good, Susan. I’m pleased you’re aware of your accomplishments”

President: “I’m sorry to break up our heated conversation, but i must head back to the presidential office, it was nice to meet you all!”

John Muir:”Nice to meet you as well. I’ll be departing as well, goodbye everyone!”

John Rockefeller: “Goodbye Mr. Muir, it was intriguing hearing about your passion for preservation.”

Jacob Riis: “ And goodbye to you all, and to you to, Susan, nice meeting you again!”

Susan B. Anthony: “Goodbye everyone, and thanks for listening! It was nice to enjoy a lovely Saturday afternoon in the mall together!”

John Muir: “ OH WAIT! TEDDY!

President: “Yes John, what is it?”

John Muir: Oh it’s nothing... Just wanted to thank you for the memorial you gave me after i died. The Muir Woods National Monument in Northern California? It’s great! I visit it sometimes, but yeah.. people are thrashing it! How can they trash it? Disrespectful and rude of them.”

President: “Oh hahaha! It’s fine John. In dues time, Karma will demand repayment one way or another... But we’re not dead yet... how would you possibly know about it?”

John Muir: “... Look at the time! I got to go! Byeee Y’all!

~ Involvement in WWI occurs.~

President: “I told you karma would demand compensation one way or another. Tsk tsk Americans.